

RESOLUTION DISMISSING THE ELECTION CONTEST
RELATING TO THE SECOND CONGRESSIONAL
DISTRICT, STATE OF HAWAII

MEETING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE
ADMINISTRATION
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, JULY 9, 2003

Printed for the use of the Committee on House Administration



U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

89-053

WASHINGTON : 2003

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
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RESOLUTION DISMISSING ELECTION CONTEST RELATING TO SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, STATE OF HAWAII

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 2003

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 2:30 p.m., in Room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Robert W. Ney (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Ney, Ehlers, Mica, Linder, Doolittle, Larson, and Brady.

Staff Present: Paul Vinovich, Staff Director; Jeff Janas, Clerk; Jennifer Hing, Assistant Clerk; Fred Hay, Counsel; George Shevlin, Minority Staff Director; Charles Howell, Minority Chief Counsel; Matt Pinkus, Minority Professional Staff; and Catherine Tran, Minority Staff Assistant.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order. There is a single item before the committee which we will address before we commence into our hearing, a resolution dismissing an election contest arising from the Second Congressional District of Hawaii.

The clerk will read the motion.

The CLERK. Resolved that the election contest relating to the office of the Representative from the Second Congressional District of Hawaii is dismissed.

The CHAIRMAN. I would like to recognize the gentleman from Connecticut, our ranking member, Mr. Larson.

Mr. LARSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the committee has determined on a bipartisan basis that this election contest is without merit. Therefore, I move that the committee report the resolution dismissing this contest favorably to the House.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the motion. Those in favor of the motion will say aye.

Those opposed will say no.

The motion is agreed to. A motion dismissing the election contest will be reported favorably to the House.

The gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Chairman, may I have a point of personal privilege for a few moments?

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you. Before we get into this very important hearing, I first have to apologize. I have to speak on the bill that

is on the floor right now, so I will be leaving shortly; I will attempt to get back later.

I just wanted to raise an issue of concern to me that is under the jurisdiction of this committee, and that is the tours of the Capitol. I believe that the tour service is not working as well as it should. I realize we are waiting for the new Visitors Center, but what we have done in the meantime is, Members have filled the gap by providing the staff-led tours. That is simply getting out of hand. This morning as I walked through the hallway, there were over 200 people lined up just to get their little sticker to take a staff-led tour.

Plus I listened to some staff members talking to each other. One said he was doing one or more tours a day for people from his district. The intent of the tour service, which incidentally does a very good job, I suspect a better job than most members of the staff because they know the history of the building, they should be giving these tours. We should be making provision for that and meeting the needs of our constituents in that way instead of using our staff time to do it.

I just wanted to get that statement on the record. I hope that you and other members of this committee can address that with the appropriate individuals involved and expand the Capitol tour service. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman for his comments. Just for those who aren't familiar, we have a give-and-take on this issue. There is a board; it has certain votes. This committee has oversight.

We try to work together. Sometimes we agree; sometimes we don't. If we don't agree, we can have an oversight hearing.

We have had a fairly harmonious give-and-take on this issue. I have been insistent, I know, and I will let our ranking member speak for himself, but we have had conversations, and he has been insistent on keeping this Capitol open. The Speaker of the House, Speaker Hastert, has said many, many times that we are going to enhance the security, but keep the People's House open. We are going to be calm but cautious. That is the approach we have tried to take.

I have struggled actually to get it to the 15-per-staff-member tour. There was a move to take it to eight. I think it ought to be expanded.

I think we have stabilized a lot of security issues. We have always got to watch; nothing is ever perfect. But I take your comments to heart. We will proceed to have another give-and-take on doing it.

I am happy to say, we have kept the building open. Only when we went to war with Iraq for a momentary, small period of time did we stop the public tours so the Capitol Hill police, because we were short, could focus more on the police beat issues, on the street and more visibility.

Having said that, we still kept the tours open by the staff because at no point in time did we say, we're going to just shut this down. I am proud of the fact we have been able to do that, but I think there is room to grow on keeping more entry and ability for people to enjoy the building. Thank you.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LARSON. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to associate myself with the remarks from the gentleman from Michigan and concur with the concerns that he has raised. We have heard from several Members who have the very same concerns that you do, while at the same time acknowledging the very delicate balance that we share here, providing both security and access at the same time.

Obviously, with the great hope of the Visitors Center that will be in place in 2005, we will alleviate a lot of the concerns that we have. But I concur with the chairman, I think there is room to grow. It certainly is worthy of further contemplation and work on our part to enhance the ability to get people through here in a timely, orderly, and in your words and in the Speaker's words, calm and cautious manner.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank both the gentlemen.

Concluding—back to the regular order, concluding some unfinished business, I ask unanimous consent that members have 7 legislative days for statements and materials to be added into the appropriate place in the record. Without objection, the material will be so entered.

I also ask unanimous consent that staff be authorized to make technical and conforming changes on all matters considered by the committee at this meeting. Without objection, so ordered.

Having completed this item of business, the committee will momentarily recess as we prepare to begin our hearing. Thank you. [Whereupon, at 2:35 p.m., the committee meeting was adjourned.]